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Security Council

Sixty-ninth year

Provisional

7179th meeting
Tuesday, 20 May 2014, 5.20 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Oh Joon	(Republic of Korea)
Members:	Argentina	Mrs. Perceval
	Australia	Ms. King
	Chad	Mr. Cherif
	Chile	Mr. Barros Melet
	China	Mr. Wang Min
	France	Mr. Araud
	Jordan	Mr. Omaish
	Lithuania	Ms. Murmokaite
	Luxembourg	Ms. Lucas
	Nigeria	Mr. Laro
	Russian Federation	Mr. Iliichev
	Rwanda	Mr. Sana
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Mark Lyall Grant
	United States of America	Ms. Power

Agenda

The situation in Mali

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The meeting was called to order at 5.20 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Mali

The President: In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Mali to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Security Council, I welcome His Excellency Mr. Abdoulaye Diop, Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali, who is joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Bamako.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Mr. Albert Koenders, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali, to participate in this meeting.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Mr. Koenders, who is also joining today's meeting via video teleconference from Bamako.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I give the floor to Mr. Koenders.

Mr. Koenders (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for this opportunity to address the Security Council following the violent incidents that have rocked Kidal over the past few days, particularly on 16 and 17 May. We regret the loss of lives resulting from these events, and we especially condemn the acts of violence, including those committed by Malian Government forces. In these difficult times for Mali, I would like to reiterate our deepest condolences to President Keita and the families of the victims executed in Kidal. The perpetrators of this hateful crime must be identified and brought to justice as soon as possible, with the support of the international community. These acts of violence by armed groups are a violation of resolution 2100 (2013) and the Preliminary Agreement of 18 June 2013.

The Security Council and the international community, from which 43 countries are contributing men and women peacekeepers to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), have not been spared. In the past few days, two Blue Helmets and 21 police officers from MINUSMA were wounded in Kidal as they supported the Malian armed forces and gendarmerie in accordance with their mandate in the days preceding and during the visit of the Prime Minister and his delegation to the northern region. We wish them a speedy recovery.

These serious incidents, occurring during an important visit by the Malian Head of Government, have highlighted the political and security challenges in Mali that the United Nations has identified over the past few months and again very recently in the context of the strategic review of MINUSMA. In particular, they reveal how complex and difficult it will be to restore State institutions in the North of the country and how urgent it is that progress be made at the level of the political process.

In accordance with resolution 2100 (2013) and the Ouagadougou Preliminary Agreement of June 2013, the United Nations remains deeply committed to effectively restoring the sovereignty and authority of the Malian State over its entire territory, including — indeed, above all — in Kidal. The restoration of the State in northern Mali is essential to achieving a solution to the underlying causes of the Malian conflict. The acts of the armed groups in Kidal against the Governorate and the Malian State forces are thus totally unacceptable. Indifference is not an option; the people suffer when the violence continues. In order to prevent any further loss of life, particularly among the civilian population, it is crucial that political initiatives be made an urgent priority, as provided for in the Ouagadougou Agreement and requested in resolution 2100 (2013).

(*spoke in English*)

The priority today is to pull Kidal back from the brink of renewed confrontation. It is imperative that every possible action be taken to avoid further violence. That is essential to prevent northern Mali from slipping into a spiral of violence that risks pulling the country back into the state of crisis that put it on the Council's agenda and that could destabilize the entire subregion. We must call on all concerned to take concrete action now to help to de-escalate tensions and avoid any further provocation. The Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad must hand over the Governorate and the administrative buildings as soon as possible. The cantonment process must move forward, and the peace initiatives taken recently, including through the

appointment of a High Representative, Mr. Modibo Keita, should proceed without delay. More violence will breed only further violence and risk reversing the progress made so far. The people of Mali will be the first to suffer, as they have all too often been in the past.

Deputy Secretary-General Eliasson called President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita yesterday to convey his extreme concern about the recent violence. Mr. Eliasson stressed the importance of following a political path in order to resolve the current crisis. While he acknowledged that the recent fighting in Kidal has unleashed a strong and understandable emotional reaction among large parts of the population, he appealed for calm and stressed the importance of de-escalating tensions.

The priority for tomorrow is to revive the political process. The international community should be unanimous in impressing on the armed groups that are signatories or adherents to the Preliminary Agreement of 18 June 2013, particularly the Mouvement national de libération de l'Azawad, that their grievances can be addressed and resolved only through peaceful and political means.

(*spoke in French*)

The United Nations will continue to support the parties concerned in their process of reconciliation and political dialogue, and hopes that inclusive peace talks will start as soon as possible, in order to repair the damage to the social tissue inflicted by this crisis, including during the past few days. We are unreservedly committed to continuing our support for this process and other key elements of our mandate in Mali, including development, capacity-building and institutional reforms.

The President: I now give the floor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, African Integration and International Cooperation of the Republic of Mali.

Mr. Diop (Mali) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to congratulate you warmly, Mr. President, on the Republic of Korea's accession to the presidency of the Security Council for the month of May, and to express our appreciation for Nigeria's outstanding leadership of the Council's work in April.

I would also like to thank the Council for convening this emergency meeting on the situation in Mali and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for his account of the serious events that occurred in Kidal on Saturday, 17 May.

We should recall that on 23 April (see S/PV.7158), when we were considering the Secretary-General's third report (S/2014/229) on the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali (MINUSMA), I spoke to the Council about the Government of Mali's firm commitment to reaching a definitive solution to the crisis affecting the North of our country, and emphasized the importance of respect for Mali's sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity. At that meeting I discussed the joint preparations for inclusive peace talks led by the Government of Mali and MINUSMA, as well as the appointment of former Prime Minister Modibo Keita as High Representative of the Head of State for the inclusive inter-Malian talks.

Less than a month later, and at a time when every effort is being made to restart the talks aimed at achieving a lasting peace, the armed groups that have benefited from the status quo to remarshal their forces chose to declare war on the State of Mali by attacking our Defence and Security Forces as they were carrying out their peaceful and pacific mission to secure the Prime Minister's visit to Kidal on 17 May.

In his capacity as head of the Administration, the Prime Minister undertook a tour the Mali's northern regions with a group of 10 Ministers, including Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal. Among other things, the purpose of the visit was to ensure the Administration's gradual redeployment in the northern regions of Mali; to assess the achievements and shortcomings on the ground in order to address in order to create the best conditions for the success of the inter-Malian inclusive talks and the intercommunity and intracommunity meetings under way to prepare for the return of displaced persons and Malian refugees; and, finally, to give a boost to the process of restoring the State's authority, national reconciliation, strengthening social cohesion and consolidating our country's national unity. That is the purpose of the battle waged by the Malian people, along with the international community, to bring about peace and national reconciliation and to rebuild the country.

While they were warmly welcomed in Gao and Timbuktu, the Prime Minister and his delegation were, unfortunately, received in Kidal with bullets and the firing of heavy weapons by armed groups in collusion with international terrorism. That resulted in dozens of

dead and wounded and in civilians being murdered in cold blood at their places of work. Hostages were also taken, and subsequently released.

If your camera will allow, I would like to show the Council some pictures of people whose heads were cut off. The photo below shows one of the assailants — a woman — who is wearing the hat of one of the prefects who was savagely murdered. Those are crimes against humanity, and the Security Council should take strong action to demonstrate the Council's determination to put an end to impunity and atrocities.

In that regard, I should point out that large banners of the Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb and Ansar Dine flew over the aggressors' vehicles, alongside those of the Mouvement national pour la libération de l'Azawad (MNLA). The links between the partners of the peace process and the terrorist groups is therefore clearly established and should be rejected and condemned by the Council in the strongest terms.

We consider that attack a heinous act and a flagrant, deliberate and premeditated violation of all the commitments previously underaken, including the relevant Security Council resolutions. The attack on the delegation of the Prime Minister and the Governor of Kidal is a despicable act — as the Council can see in the photo — in the face of which no one can remain indifferent. The Government of Mali welcomes the expressions of compassion, solidarity and support shown to our people.

However, we note that the Government's delegation did not benefit from the support and protection to which it had a right to expect under the circumstances. This situation could have lead to much more tragic developments. The few troops of the Malian armed forces present on the ground — "few" because that was what was stipulated in the Ouagadougou Agreement and respected by the Malian side — had to make do against throngs of heavily armed narco-terrorists.

Under the circumstances, I think that the Council should take the clear position that there is an agressor in this case — namely, the MNLA and its accomplices — and that they attacked the Prime Minister and his peaceful delegation, who were travelling as part of a routine administrative visit. I hope that the Council's statement and recommendations will clearly make clear that there are not two beligerents: there is one agressor here, which must be clearly identified. The Government of Mali deserves the Council's support.

In accordance with resolution 2100 (2013), the international community as a whole recognizes Mali's sovereignty throughout its national territory. Furthermore, it defends Mali's territorial integrity, unity and the secular and republican form of the Malian State.

Kidal is part of Mali's northern region, and of Mali as a whole. Kidal has always been, and will always remain, an integral part of the Republic of Mali. There is no reason that Mali's senior officials should not be able to go there. The Malian army is in Kidal today and will remain deployed there to ensure that the State's authority is in effect in every centimetre of our national territory. Kidal is no different from Timbuktu or Kayes. I hope that the Council will likewise take note of that fact.

The attack in Kidal cannot go unpunished. We ask that an international commission be established to verify the facts so that the perpetrators are brought before national and international courts.

The Republic of Mali will assume and respect all its international commitments, as it has always done. I can assure you of that, Mr. President. Nothing and no one will distract the Government of Mali from its objectives, including the opening of a sincere dialogue that leads to a comprehensive and definitive peace agreement.

We solemnly reiterate here the desire for dialogue and peace resolutely expressed by His Excellency Mr. Ibrahim Boubacar Keita, President of the Republic and Head of State — a desire widely shared by the vast majority of the Malian people. Despite the criminal acts of armed groups, the Kidal region is made up primarily by Malians who aspire only to peace and well-being. The Government will also continue its development efforts throughout the territory of Mali.

Based on the lessons learned since the deployment of MINUSMA, and against the backdrop of the renewal of its mandate, among other things, we ask the Security Council for a much more robust mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, so as to address the risks in the field, especially based on what we have learned from the events in Kidal on 17 May, as well as to disarm all armed groups, in particular the MNLA, as has been done elsewhere. I think there are precedents in the Council's work to better respond to the situation in our country. I hope that all of those

paths can be explored and that our country can benefit from that type of support.

Once again, Mali will never lose sight of one of its core values, namely, respecting its commitments. We will therefore pursue dialogue, as we are convinced that it is the apporpriate solution, if, of course, all parties — the Government of Mali, the international community and the armed movements — fulfil their commitments, each at its own level, with resolve and the utmost commitment.

That will be the price of capitalizing on the great solidarity of the international community, from which our country has benefited and for which I reiterate the gratitude of our entire nation. It is the price of being able to support the fragile process of stabilization in Mali to which the Council has devoted so much time and energy and so many resources. We must now move beyond rhetoric to truly ensure that what happened never happens again and that the Malian State and Government are affirmed in its desire for dialogue and to restore State authority throughout its territory.

The President: There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers. I now invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion on the subject.

The meeting rose at 5.40 p.m.